9 Aug 1908

Cleeve House

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Sunday

My Billy

A nice long letter from you this morning - at least it wasn't really so very long, but the envelope was very bulky as it included one from Hilton Young. He certainly sounds determined - but jocose. I don't think you had better marry him. (Love.) I really did discuss you - & as for the full moon I don't know what you mean - Will you ever discuss me with

Is Arnold Mary? Mrs Ball is now reading Mrs Cornwallis-West in Sidmouth - I'm sure they'll love it very much. Guild printed?

Cleeve House

9 Aug 1908

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Sunday

My Billy

A nice long letter from you this morning - at least it wasn't really so very long, but the envelope was very bulky as it included one from Hilton Young. He certainly sounds determined - but jocose. I don't think you had better marry him. Once I really did discuss you - & as for the full moon I don't know what you mean - but you ever discuss me with

Is Arnold Mary? Yes Ball is now reading Esperanto - in Sidmouth - I've never heard of it very quite likely!

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

your husband as) discuss
you with mine?

We have passed our
usual Sunday, except that
M: Arnold has been to
supper which somewhat
enlivened matters. It seems
like a draught of water
in a desert to meet
someone who is not ignorant
of another world & point
of view & is conscious of
some importance in beauty.
However my desert has
a good many green spots.

in the shape of pettings. So I am not really to be pitied nor do I suppose you do pity me - Such the atmosphere of a room in which one person is asleep another reading E. F. Benson steadily through is worse than a London fog.

With great diplomacy & cunning I think Clive has induced Lorna to go to Bath on Friday - so that we shall be able to meet on Saturday - If she were to come into us there would really be no point in coming at all - for all

conversation would be reduced
to commonplace, Billy &
Wombat - as Wombats in
his grave, poor beast - would
have to hide in the Pump
Room & all your pranks
would be repressed. So that
we should not meet at all
for a Monday I suppose
you go to Manchester. But
I think Lorna is certain to
go on Friday so Saturday
will be all right for us. I
can't help thinking what would
happen if my letters were
suddenly to be seen by the
Balls. What a whited sep-
ulchre they would think me.
What on earth did you say

By the way - you must write to me so that I get a letter on Saturday morning - for we don't intend to break it to the family that we are going to Bath this Saturday morning. when I shall say that I have just heard from you saying that you are going to be in Bath that day & asking us to meet you there if we can - This is just to make doubly sure that Emma doesn't take it into her head to come into us at the last moment, for by that time she will have made her plans for the day - Your letters

generally do reach me in the morning.

T. PARSONS 3.2.73

Cleeve House

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury. Aug. 10th

My Billy.

My husband had a charming letter from you this morning so I should not really write to you - especially as this will arrive at the same time as the letter I wrote last night. However I have to write on business. First about Gurth - will you send him off by a train leaving Wells on Friday at 11 - 8. I hope it isn't a very awkward hour. Clive worked it out. He will have to change at Witham. You might tell the guard. Also

say that he will be met at Paddington at 2-53. I am instructing my domestic to do this. I hope he will travel safely poor old heart. Next day he will have to go alone to Eskdale.

If you don't hear from Mrs Ashton I should suggest your going to Tenby where you could stay at some hotel for one night & walk over & get lodgings at Manorbier the next day. There must be plenty of lodgings there & I hope you will hear from Mrs Ashton soon. I don't know the name of any one else there, except Lizzie Beynon, our

house-parlour maid, whose family lives there & who would know about us. I don't know their address, but probably Mawthers would find them.

Let me know when you hear of poor old Helen's decease. I hope you won't have to do & console Katharine. It would be a melancholy proceeding & I don't know what you'd say or do. I feel I shall have to compose a letter to one of the family. I think Dorothea - & God knows how I am to do it. How very awkward these things are. Will Aunt Stephen decease too in consequence? I suppose Nun hopes so.

My little nurse maid tells me histories of her family. One had diabetes. her hair fell out, her teeth broke, etc. etc - another can do no lessons & I suppose

is daft. anthea is a great trial to their mother. a friend has fits. It became so awful that I had to bury my face in Julian's too scanty locks. but I am sure the poor enjoy these things.

Julian's eye-lashes are the loveliest when you ever saw. like the down on a butterfly's wing. they are dark but shine with iridescent gold when you look at them from above with the light on them. He sends Aunt Lotty his love.

Do you know that I am contemplating getting him a high chair such as you used to have to eat your porridge from?

Yr V.B.

Cleeve House.

11 Aug 1908

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

Tuesday

My Billy.

I had a charming long letter from you this morning with flattering hints of wide gardens & day light round corners & I don't know what all. I pass all down my back when I get such scenes of imagery thrown at my feet & reflect how envied I shall be of the world some day when it learns in what terms I was with that great genius. The creator of

Valentine Ambrose & his
wife Helen (?) & that
original character - will
none of my suggestions
do? Polly - Sarah.
Daphne - I can't think
of anything at this moment.
I wish we were having
evening walks & planning
our autumn drives. Perhaps
Siena or Florence will pro-
vide a good setting.
I didn't mean by saying
that Gillian Young was prone
to reflect upon his sermons
& purpose - which I daresay
is deadly & determined - but

rather upon him himself. His humour is (abused & rather like an elephant in a china shop &) can't imagine it very well mated to yours with for which we all pay you so many marks. I don't think I'd like him for your husband but then whom should) ? I should like Lytton as a brother in law better than anyone) Know but the only way) can perceive of bringing that to pass would be if he were to fall in love with Adrian - & even then Adrian would probably reject him. But I expect you've heard yet exhausted all the charming young men in the world. &) Rivers we are near the

and at another stage of your
lives wish be married. Can't
you imagine us in 20 years
time, you & I. the two
celebrated ladies, with our
families about us, yours
very odd & small & yours
with a growing reputation
for your works - I with
nothing but my capacities
as a hostess & my husband's
value to live upon? Your
husband will probably be
dead I think for you
must have boiled his mutton
with enough care. But you
will be quite happy & enjoy
passing with your clever &
cranky daughters. I'm afraid
they'll be more beautiful than

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury.

mine, who I know will take after the Balls. When mine is on the road I shall refuse to come here & shall see you every day & gaze at the most beautiful of Aunt Julia's photographs. incessantly. Do you think Belinda Bell would be quite impossible? I am rather taken with the name at present & I believe it would suit her character rather well. I don't know where this letter has wandered to. Clive sends you a post card about Mrs Dobson

I can make no other engagement except that you should go to Tenby, as I said before. For me night. I don't know if that would mean too much bother.

I think we are sure to be able to come on Saturday. I suppose we shall meet at the same hour & place.

Yrs VB.

Cleeve House.

(12 Aug 1908)

46, Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury. Wednesday.

My Billy

I am really very writing to enclose this letter to Sidy. Will you address it for me? You had a long letter from my husband this morning I know - written this morning that is to say - which I for one was allowed to see - so you don't really deserve one from me too. I expect Hilton Young has made up his mind to see if you will do. Perhaps he'll be so overcome by his

passions that kill prompt us
to resist, & perhaps guilt be
so overcome by weakness &
a desire for experience that
will accept him. If you
do there will be no turning
back - you will have to marry
him for I'm sure he's as
determined as a mule.
Anyhow it will be very
interesting to hear what
has happened on Saturday.
Godmanchester must be
rather stirred I suppose.
Poor old things. I think a

middle aged death is perhaps the most melancholy. Have you heard from Katharine?

I had a letter from Madge but only or chiefly about a nurse maid for whom she wants to find a place. I'm writing to ask Lily if she'd like her. As you say she wrote to you. her infant can't have arrived yet. Madge said she would be in London about Oct. 10th & hoped to see us.

Clive is absorbed in Adam Bede & like Lytton seems to have discovered George Eliot. You & I knew her in the nursery I suppose.

Thanks for Juliana's nurse

returns on Friday - I dont
like milk interesting.
I'll do it for you when I
have appendicites. Oh for
what a stupid letter. I
am writing with an ouata
pen which I have bought
to save my dresses from
ink - but I discovered
that it can shoot ink
anywhere & has already
done so with effect on my
pink skirt.

Think of us with a
tennis party here tomorrow.

Yours V.B.

1908

CLEEVE HOUSE,
MELKSHAM,
WILTS.

Aug. 13th

My Billy.

I can't know why you had no letter from me one day. For I have certainly written to you every day, if not 4 times, & that in spite of the fact that to one of my letters Clive will get the answer probably. It must be the fault of the post. Have you had tooth-ache & have you had it again? If so you had much better go to Tweedale during the one or two days you are in London before we go to Italy.

for it with the awful if you have it there - Poor little beast: I hope it's all right again. I had a long & amusing letter from Adrian this morning. He seems to find a good deal of interest in watching Saxon's ways. He is apparently taken for an imbecile by the inhabitants for to all their remarks he replies "Um-m-m" & smiles. He also has a habit of sitting silent for some time & then looking up sharply & saying "Yes, well, I think, on the whole perhaps it may be;

or "I don't know, I don't know at all." I can quite imagine him with his old man's habits & little peculiarities. I am really afraid he is becoming prodigious. I had another letter from him a day or two ago, entirely taken up with an inventory of the smoking room in which he was sitting. It's really too odd. Even at his dullest I shouldn't have expected him to write such dull letters. It seems to me to show that his old age is more deeply rooted than I had thought for it cannot be only social if his letters too show it.

Has Hilton Young written & come & proposed yet?

At this moment you may be refusing him. But no after dinner it is not likely.

I suppose you'll go to your Bathless cottage at Manorhead & you'll get very dirty. Billy & I don't think I shall be able to kiss you as much as usual for some time after.

You ask what kind of letters I like. What can I say but one thing?

Of course what I really like is flattery & affection. But you may write a good deal about yours would too - a good deal more than you do.

I have written a most funny letter to old Dodder. But I didn't know what to say. Thank God my nurse comes home tomorrow I look forward to Saturday

yours B.

T. PARSONS 3.2.73